

Bibliographic Control of Web Resources: A Library of Congress Action Plan

Work Plan Form for Action Item 4.1

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1. *Leader:* To be identified from among the task group membership.

Email address: To be determined.

Principle Investigator: None needed.

Work Group Participants: (1) John Riemer, Head, Cataloging Department, Young Research Library, UCLA. John served as chair of the 1st and 2nd Task Groups on Journals in Aggregator Databases. (2) Matthew Beacom, Catalog Librarian for Networked Information Resources, Cataloging Department, Yale University Library. Matthew served on the 2nd Task Group on Journals in Aggregator Databases. (3) Oliver Pesch, Ebsco Information Services. Oliver served on the 1st Task Group on Journals in Aggregator Databases. (4) Jina Wakimoto, Cataloging Coordinator, California State University, Northridge. (5) At least one other member to be identified as soon as possible.

Stakeholders: Major stakeholders are library cataloging units nationwide, which must attempt to deal with the issue of bibliographic control of aggregator packages, and the vendors of such packages, who have historically been the source of records to provide such bibliographic control. Public services librarians are also major stakeholders, since they must be able to make sense of the data presented in OPACs to the true ultimate stakeholders, the users of those OPACs. Vendors of major automated systems could be secondary stakeholders if their generic record load programs need to be enhanced to facilitate load or update of aggregator records. ALCTS Publisher/Vendor Library Relations Committee is another stakeholder/collaborator.

2. *CMT Liaison:* Maureen Landry

3. *Points of convergence/dependencies with other action items:* Action item 2.4 centers on the consolidation of display of multiple related bibliographic records at the local level. The question of multiple records vs. a single record surfaces often in the discussion of records for aggregators – the “lumpers” vs. “splitters” controversy. Consequently, progress made on action item 2.4 will affect the way that catalog records for aggregator packages are viewed.

4. *Consultants:* None needed.

5. *Text for action item:* This action item was assigned to the PCC Standing Committee on Automation because two previous task groups of the Committee had already completed projects related to aggregators. After considerable deliberation, the committee revised action item 4.1 slightly to read as follows:

(1) Develop specifications for the creation and maintenance of records for titles contained in aggregator packages that will enable vendors to produce high-quality bibliographic data and accurate information about the volumes/dates of coverage of individual titles. In addition to the creation of original records, vendors must be able to provide customers with high-quality updated bibliographic records when bibliographic data and/or scope of coverage change significantly. Communicate the specifications to the vendor community and encourage their adoption. (2) Communicate to the library community (especially public services and acquisitions librarians) about the importance of securing appropriate bibliographic control and maintenance as a component of subscribing to an aggregator package.

6. *Estimate of costs:* Costs are expected to be minimal. The members of the new task group should be able to accomplish most of their work via e-mail, without any need for travel expenses (face-to-face meetings at ALA on the part of task group members attending ALA for other reasons would certainly be warranted).

7. *Identify sources of funding. Availability of funding may be limited.* LC (should unanticipated minor expenses arise).

8. *Define task components and deliverables for the action item:* Briefly, action item 4.1 acknowledges the need for readily available sets of bibliographic records for the titles contained in aggregator sets.

Furthermore, the action item assigns to the lead agency (in this case the PCC Standing Committee on Automation) the responsibility for articulating specifications for the records, while aggregator vendors, in general, are assumed to be the primary creators and provider of records. The Standing Committee on Automation has already accomplished much of action item 4.1 through the work of two previous task groups. It is now proposed to establish a new 3rd Task Group to complete any tasks that might be considered unfinished under the wording of the action item 4.1 charge. Below are excerpts from that charge with notes—many taken from reports of the earlier task groups—about the status of activity.

Develop specifications for the creation and maintenance of records for titles contained in aggregator packages that will enable vendors to produce high-quality bibliographic data and accurate information about the volumes/dates of coverage of individual titles.

In its final report, the 2nd Task Group on Journals in Aggregator Databases outlined four sets of elements for Bibliographic records: Recommended Data Elements for Machine-Derived Serial Records; Recommended Data Elements for Machine-Generated Serial Records; Proposed Data Elements for Machine-Derived Monographic Records; Proposed Data Elements for Machine-Generated Monographic Records. One of the responsibilities of the new task group, will be to propose a mechanism for reviewing these specifications, refining them as necessary and communicating with the vendors. These sets of recommended data elements assumed that coverage information would be encoded in 856 fields. The new task group may wish to investigate the feasibility of using aggregator records to create and update MARC holdings records in local systems also. It is not presumed in this charge that the task group will actually find this to be feasible.

In addition to the creation of original records, vendors must be able to provide customers with high-quality updated bibliographic records when bibliographic data and/or scope of coverage change significantly.

From the final report of the 2nd Task Group: “Throughout its work, the Task Group has given the highest priority to those aggregations with the largest numbers of titles, which are also those with the most volatile contents.” While the task group acknowledged the difficulty of maintaining records, the final report does not necessarily contain explicit instructions for libraries. The 3rd Task Group, in fulfilling this action item, will survey the libraries

who use vendor-supplied records to find out what maintenance strategies are in use and how successful (or unsuccessful) they are, and (b) publish its findings as a “best practices” Web site that will be useful for vendors and libraries.

Communicate the specifications to the vendor community and encourage their adoption.

The members of the 2nd Task Group have continued to work with vendors. From its final report: As had first occurred two years earlier, several Task Group members met with several representatives of LexisNexis, during the American Library Association Annual Meeting in June 2001, to discuss the need and strategies for a set of records for the titles in Academic Universe.” The 3rd Task Group, in fulfilling this part of the charge, will identify the vendors whose aggregator products lack record sets or whose record sets deviate significantly from the “recommended data elements” practices in the final report of the 2nd Task Group in order to encourage them to produce record sets conforming to recommended practice. If the 3rd Task Force concludes that it would be feasible to address the creation of MARC holdings records, it may also wish to communicate with ILS vendors to determine whether they have the tools to permit such record creation, and to encourage them to develop such tools if they do not.

Communicate to the library community (especially public services and acquisitions librarians) about the importance of securing appropriate bibliographic control and maintenance as a component of subscribing to an aggregator package.

In discussion at ALA Midwinter in New Orleans, the SCA identified an additional need for education of the library community about the value and availability of record sets. The best way to encourage aggregators to produce high-quality record sets is to create marketplace demand for such sets. This, in turn, means that the librarians responsible for deciding whether to purchase a particular aggregator’s services should be educated as to the desirability of considering the availability of records for the aggregation when making such purchase decisions. The Task Group will determine the appropriate mechanism or mechanisms for bringing this to the attention of that part of the library community. Such mechanisms might include, but not be limited to, articles in selected library journals, or text inserted into new or revised ALA publications. When aggregators already offer a high- quality

record set, they should be encouraged to emphasize that fact in their advertising efforts.

9. Timeline for completion of action item:

- (a) Design survey to determine how libraries are currently loading aggregator records: June-Sept. 2002.
- (b) Administer survey: Oct.-Dec. 2002.
- (c) Compile survey results and publish on library “best practices” Web site: Jan.-Mar. 2003.
- (d) Continue to work with vendors to encourage creation of record sets and adoption of recommended data elements as previously specified in final report of the 2nd Task Group and as possibly refined by 3rd Task Group: Ongoing, but formally complete with the anticipated discharge of the 3rd Task Group in June 2003.
- (e) Consider whether to develop a recommended standard for loading/creating MARC holdings records: June-Dec. 2002.
- (f) Communicate any recommend standard for loading/creating MARC holding records to aggregator vendors: Jan.–June 2003.
- (g) Investigate issues involved with loading/creating/updating MARC holdings records in particular local systems: Jan.-June 2003.

10. Communications plan: The 3rd Task Group will submit quarterly reports of its activities to both the Standing Committee on Automation and to the CMT Liaison on or before the following dates:

July 1, 2002

Oct. 1 2002

Jan.1, 2003

Apr.1, 2003

July 1, 2002 (final report)

It is understood that the CMT Liaison will use these reports to update the Action Plan itself, for articles in LCCN (the Cataloging Directorate’s e-journal), the Cataloging Directorate Annual Report, and journal articles.